

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 299306 TOSEC 320107

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DRAFTED BY NEA:ARLAY:LB

APPROVED BY NEA:ALATHERTON, JR.

S/S:RPERITO

S:DPASSAGE

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 299306 TOSEC 320107

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, US, LY

SUBJECT: ACTION MEMORANDUM : RELATIONS WITH LIBYA (S/S
NO. 7625256)

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM NEA/ALATHERTON, R.

1. PROBLEM

YOU WERE APPROACHED IN MEXICO CITY BY THE LIBYAN PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE TO THE UNITED NATIONS, WHO DISCUSSED WITH YOU HIS INTEREST IN THE IMPROVEMENT OF US-LIBYAN RELATIONS, INCLUDING THE EXCHANGE OF AMBASSADORS. YOU SUGGESTED HE MIGHT TALK WITH BILL SCRANTON, BUT SAID ANY POLICY DECISIONS SUCH AS RELEASE OF THE C-130'S WERE REALLY SOMETHING FOR THE NEW ADMINISTRATION. YOU THEN ASKED ME TO PREPARE A MESSAGE TO FAHMY ASKING HIS REACTION TO OUR RESPONDING TO LIBYAN INITIATIVES FOR AN IMPROVEMENT OF RELATIONS, PARTICULARLY AN EXCHANGE OF AMBASSADORS. I ATTACH A TELEGRAM FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION (ATTACHMENT 1).

2. DISCUSSION

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 299306 TOSEC 320107

WE HAVE KEPT OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH LIBYA AT A MINIMAL LEVEL
PRIMARILY FOR THREE REASONS:

-- LIBYA IS THE PRINCIPAL SUPPORTER OF TERRORISM AND
SUBVERSION THROUGHOUT THE WORLD;

-- LIBYA ACTIVELY OPPOSES AND SEEKS TO UNDERMINE OUR
EFFORTS TO NEGOTIATE AN END TO THE MIDDLE EAST DISPUTE;

-- EGYPTIAN RELATIONS WITH LIBYA HAVE BEEN SO STRAINED
THAT WE FELT ANY WARMING TOWARD QADHAFI ON OUR PART WOULD
CAUSE RESENTMENT IN CAIRO.

3. WE ARE NOW, IN FACT, CONSIDERING WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT
WHETHER WE SHOULD RECOMMEND TO YOU STEPS THAT WOULD RE-
EMPHASIZE OUR DISPLEASURE WITH QADHAFI'S SUPPORT FOR
TERRORISM AND SUBVERSION, WHICH APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN
STEPPED UP IN RECENT MONTHS. THIS IS IN PART AN EFFORT TO
BE RESPONSIVE TO A SENATE RESOLUTION (SUBMITTED BY JAVITS)
ADOPTED LAST SEPTEMBER FOLLOWING THE TERRORIST ATTACK AT
ISTANBUL AIRPORT. THE RESOLUTION URGED QUOTE THE PRESI-
DENT TO CONDUCT A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF ALL UNITED
STATES' TRADE AND DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS TO DETERMINE WHAT
FURTHER APPROPRIATE ACTIONS, INCLUDING SPECIFIC SANCTIONS,
MAY BE TAKEN TO DISCOURAGE ANY FURTHER SUPPORT OF INTER-
NATIONAL TERRORISM UNQUOTE. THE RESOLUTION WAS DIRECTED
PRIMARILY AT LIBYA. IN THE MAIN, HOWEVER, THE PAPER WE
ARE PREPARING FOR YOU WILL FOCUS ON WHETHER OUR OWN CON-
TINUING PROGRAM TO COMBAT TERRORISM AROUND THE WORLD WOULD
REQUIRE ANY FURTHER ACTION ON OUR PART NOW WITH RESPECT TO
LIBYA.

4. HAVING REFLECTED FURTHER ON THIS QUESTION SINCE OUR
DISCUSSION, I FEEL THAT ANY ENHANCEMENT OF OUR RELATIONSHIP
WITH LIBYA AT THIS TIME, IN THE FACE OF WHAT IS GENERALLY
SEEN AS INCREASING LIBYAN SUPPORT FOR TERRORIST AND SUB-
VERSIVE MOVEMENTS, AND FOLLOWING LIBYAN DISSOCIATION FROM
THE RESULTS OF THE RIYADH/CAIRO SUMMITS WHICH THE MAIN-
STREAM OF ARAB OPINION SUPPORTED, WOULD BE LOOKED AT
ASKANCE NOT ONLY IN THE ARAB WORLD BUT ELSEWHERE. EVEN
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 STATE 299306 TOSEC 320107

THE EXCHANGE OF AMBASSADORS AT THIS TIME, AFTER SEVERAL
YEARS OF NO AMBASSADORS, COULD BE PERCEIVED BY OTHERS IN
THE AREA AS A MORE SIGNIFICANT SIGNAL THAN IT WAS INTENDED
TO BE. WHILE IN PRINCIPLE I FAVOR RESPONDING TO REQUESTS
FOR DIALOGUE WHERE RELATIONS ARE BAD, EVEN WHEN THE
PROSPECTS FOR IMPROVEMENT AND ADVANTAGE TO OUR INTERESTS
ARE REMOTE, THE TIMING IN THIS CASE STRIKES ME AS PARTIC-
ULARLY DIFFICULT. AT A MINIMUM, I WOULD RECOMMEND THAT YOU

AWAIT THE CONSIDERED STUDY THAT WE ARE PREPARING BEFORE
MAKING ANY MOVES. WE WILL OF COURSE ALSO HAVE TO CONSIDER

THAT WHATEVER WE MIGHT NOW EMBARK UPON WOULD PRIMARILY
TAKE EFFECT UNDER THE NEW ADMINISTRATION.

5. RECOMMENDATION:

THAT YOU NOT PURSUE WITH FAHMY OR OTHERWISE THE QUESTION
OF IMPROVED RELATIONS OR EXCHANGING AMBASSADORS WITH LIBYA
BEYOND HAVING AMBASSADOR SCRANTON CONTINUE TO DISCUSS THE
MATTER IN GENERAL TERMS IN NEW YORK, LEAVING THE INITIATIVE
WITH THE LIBYANS.

APPROVE.....

DISAPPROVE.....

ALTERNATIVELY,

THAT, IF YOU PREFER AT LEAST TO INQUIRE OF THE EGYPTIANS,
YOU APPROVE THE ATTACHED TELEGRAM TO CAIRO.

APPROVE.....

DISAPPROVE.....

6. ATTACHMENT: CABLE TO CAIRO (ALTERNATE RECOMMENDATION):

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EMBASSY CAIRO
FOR AMBASSADOR FROM THE SECRETARY
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SECRET

PAGE 04 STATE 299306 TOSEC 320107

E.O. GDS

TAGS: PFOR, LY, US

SUBJECT: U.S.-LIBYAN RELATIONS

WE HAVE BEEN KEEPING OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH LIBYA AT A
MINIMAL LEVEL, WITHOUT AMBASSADORS IN EITHER CAPITAL AND
WITH LITTLE SUBSTANTIVE INTERCHANGE. WE HAVE HELD UP FOR
MORE THAN 3 YEARS DELIVERY OF 8 C-130'S PURCHASED BY
LIBYA DESPITE FREQUENT LIBYAN PROTESTS. OUR COOL APPROACH
HAS RESULTED FROM LIBYA'S ACTIVE SUPPORT FOR TERRORISM
AND SUBVERSION THROUGHOUT THE WORLD AND FROM QADHAFI'S
TOTALLY REJECTIONIST ATTITUDE--AND BEHAVIOR--REGARDING THE
ARAB-ISRAELI DISPUTE. WE HAVE ALSO HAD VERY MUCH IN MIND,
HOWEVER, THE STRAINED RELATIONS BETWEEN LIBYA AND EGYPT
AND HAVE NOT WANTED TO CONSIDER MOVING TOWARD THE LIBYANS

OUT OF DEFERENCE TO OUR CLOSE TIES WITH CAIRO. THE LIBYANS NOW HAVE ASKED US AGAIN FOR AN EXCHANGE OF VIEWS TO CONSIDER WAYS OF IMPROVING OUR RELATIONSHIP, HOWEVER, AND WE WANTED FIRST TO GET EGYPTIAN THOUGHTS ON THE SUBJECT. PLEASE PASS THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE FROM ME TO

FAHMY, THEREFORE:

-- AS FAHMY IS DOUBTLESS AWARE, OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH LIBYA HAS BEEN A COOL ONE FOR THE PAST TWO YEARS OR MORE, AND WE HAVE CONSCIOUSLY KEPT IT THAT WAY. WE DO NOT EVEN HAVE AMBASSADORS IN EACH OTHER CAPITALS.

-- WE HAVE TAKEN THIS POSITION TOWARD LIBYA BECAUSE OF QADHAFI'S ACTIVE SUPPORT OF TERRORISM AND SUBVERSION AND BECAUSE OF HIS REJECTIONIST ATTITUDE TOWARD THE ARAB-ISRAELI DISPUTE AND TOWARD OUR ARAB FRIENDS WHO SUPPORT A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT. WE HAVE ALSO DONE SO OUT OF A SENSE OF LOYALTY TO OUR CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH EGYPT, WHOSE OWN RELATIONS WITH QADHAFI HAVE SO FREQUENTLY BEEN STRAINED.

-- THE LIBYANS HAVE NOW APPROACHED US -- THEIR UNITED NATIONS PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE, KIKHIA, SAW ME RECENTLY IN MEXICO CITY -- AND REQUESTED EXCHANGES LOOKING TOWARD BETTER RELATIONS. I SUGGESTED HE TALK TO AMBASSADOR
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 05 STATE 299306 TOSEC 320107

SCRANTON AT THE UN, WHO IS UNDER INSTRUCTIONS SIMPLY TO LISTEN, BUT I MUST WEIGH WHETHER IT IS FEASIBLE AND DESIRABLE AT THIS TIME TO CONSIDER RESPONDING IN ANY MEANINGFUL WAY TO LIBYAN OVERTURES TO IMPROVE OUR RELATIONS.

-- FAHMY WILL RECALL THAT WHEN WE LAST SOUGHT EGYPTIAN VIEWS ABOUT STEPS WITH LIBYA INCLUDING AN EXCHANGE OF AMBASSADORS, FAHMY INDICATED IT WOULD NOT BE TIMELY FROM EGYPT'S POINT OF VIEW. I WOULD VERY MUCH APPRECIATE FAHMY'S FRANK THOUGHTS ON THIS SUBJECT IN THE CURRENT SITUATION. IF WE WERE TO MAKE A MODEST GESTURE TOWARD IMPROVING RELATIONS WITH TRIPOLI, SUCH AS AN EXCHANGE OF AMBASSADORS (WE ALREADY HAVE DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS AND EMBASSIES RUN BY CHARGES), WOULD THIS BE A SOURCE OF EMBARRASSMENT FOR HIM AND PRESIDENT SADAT?

-- I SHOULD STRESS THAT WE HAVE IN NO SENSE DECIDED TO MOVE IN THIS DIRECTION. WE ONLY WISH TO HAVE ALL THE RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS IN HAND WHEN WE WEIGH THE LIBYAN REQUEST. END TEXT.

7. DRAFTED:NEA:ARDAY:TH
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